

CDC Health Information for International Travel 2010 (The Yellow Book)

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CDC Health Information for International Travel 2010 (The Yellow Book) has again gained weight, plus 37%, since the 2008 edition, and it has been extensively revised. It has the ambition “to be a comprehensive resource for the practitioner and the public to find the answers to their travel-related questions, whether before travel, during travel, or post-travel” (p xii). Thus, over the past years it has evolved to become a textbook about travel medicine with 528 pages.

Since the initial rather dry pamphlet in 1967, *The Yellow Book* has become a modern, colorful, easy-to-search tool, and it has made great progress since the previous edition. More than one-third of the book is devoted to chapter 2 (“The Pre-Travel Consultation”), which offers guidance about travel-related and routine vaccines, malaria, and self-treatable diseases. A final subchapter about counseling and advice for travelers describes what persons can do to minimize their health risks, such as personal protection measures against mosquito bites, sunburn, and food poisoning from marine toxins, whereas the preventive measures that travelers should take to avoid acquiring sexually transmit-

ted diseases are rather hidden in chapter 5 (“Other Infectious Diseases Related to Travel”). A segment in chapter 2 includes a country-by-country list about yellow fever requirements and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, and another segment similarly includes information about malaria, which is certainly most useful.

On the other hand, the maps showing countries where malaria is endemic may be misleading: some individuals may believe that, for instance, malaria is endemic in all of Brazil and prescribe prophylaxis even for a trip to Sao Paulo, because the entire country is colored brown, indicating endemicity. The map that is annually published by the World Health Organization in *International Travel and Health* [1] is more instructive. In addition, the recommendations on typhoid vaccine for travelers are rudimentary: “CDC recommends.... [it] for travelers to areas where there is a recognized risk of exposure to *S. Typhi*” (p 45). However, there is no map showing these areas. If we use the maps published by the World Health Organization, for example, Mexico and parts of southern Europe are in the median incidence range (10–100 cases per 100,000 per year); thus, should vaccination be recommended?

The interesting, newly developed chapter 3 is entitled “Select Destinations and Travel Itineraries.” Although overall, it is well done, the authors may consider adding a segment targeted at the most frequent American travelers (those visiting Mexico and the Caribbean) in the next edition. Other chapters include “The Post-Travel Consultation,” “Conveyance and Transportation Issues,” and “Travel with Infants and Children.” Chapter 8 includes a mixture of information about immunocompromised persons, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, persons visiting friends and relatives, air crews, and persons

with chronic illness. The detailed index does not indicate that there would be a special segment relating to the special needs of older travelers, except for a remark on cruise ships. The final chapter recommends procedures for newly arrived immigrants and refugees.

This book has been written by a range of very competent experts; in fact, the authors are composed of the entire continental elite in the subject. This reference covers all aspects related to travel health, and it is as evidence based as possible. It is not only an essential tool for travel health professionals in the Americas, but it is also a valuable resource to those elsewhere.

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Reference

1. World Health Organization. International travel and health. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2009.

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